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Trinity River Restoration Program

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David R. Wellock
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October 4, 2016

Subject: Your letter dated July 11, 2016 and received here September 26, 2016

Dear Mr. Wellock,

I was asked last week by the Trinity Adaptive Management Working Group (TAMWG), through the Trinity Management Council (TMC) which directs our work, to respond to your letter dated July 11, 2016. First, it was a pleasure to meet you last week at the TAMWG meeting. Thank you for your continued interest in activities to restore the fish and wildlife along the Trinity River.

Given the number and breadth of questions raised in your letter, I think it would make the most sense to answer them one by one. I have placed your questions in italics and our answers below.

What was the high water release on May 8th? Was it 10,000 as reported or was it higher? Was the next release higher although it was supposed to be 10,000 also? When I asked this question, TRRP said it was not higher. Paul Catanese said it was higher at his place, which is downstream from our property. He said he measures the elevation of the water by seeing how high it comes up steps on his property. No response from TRRP regarding this information, instead another subject was raised. The elevation of the river is of particular concern when people have water systems drawing legally from the river.

The period that you inquired about was during the ramp up to our spring restoration flow release. I will refer you to the attached graph of U.S. Geological Survey stream gauge data[1] for that period at Limekiln Gulch (available at http://nwis.waterdata.usgs.gov/ca/nwis), which should be the nearest gauge to your location. After looking at the flow peaks on May 10 and May 14, the maximum instantaneous flow reading was 10,500cfs at Limekiln Gulch. The reading of 10,500cfs was during the first peak, but at night so may have been difficult for a landowner to measure. The maximum instantaneous flow at Limekiln Gulch during the second peak was 10, 200cfs. The USGS stream gauge data from Lewiston indicates a maximum instantaneous flow

[1] As of this time, the USGS data is still 'provisional' and therefore subject to revision.

Assessment of pool depth changes in the Trinity River between Lewiston Dam and the North Fork Trinity River. Technical Report: TR-TRRP-2013-1
http://odp.trrp.net/Data/Documents/Details.aspx?document=2110). The intent of the program is to facilitate natural hydrologic and geomorphic process in the river. In other words we want to make the river act like a river. In places where bedrock or wood cause scour, or as the river's energy dictates between bends, pools will be maintained.

...what is the distance between the bottom of the existing bridge and the water right now? How much as the elevation of the river changed at the Bucktail Bridge since it was constructed in 1982/1983?

We have terrain models based on data from 2004, 2009, and 2011, plus data currently being collected for 2016 in the vicinity of the bridge, but to my knowledge, data on earlier depths and elevations are not readily available. The velocity in the channel as it necks down to pass that bridge should be sufficient to prevent significant deposition of sediment there per Dr. Dave Gaeuman, our geomorphologist. Data from 2004 through 2011 indicates a deepening trend over that time period.

...Has the number of fish increased in the last ten years?

This is a challenging question, but the short answer is yes. Screw trap capture data shows a significant positive trend in the number of wild juvenile salmon migrating from down the Trinity River. Determining whether the program is influencing the number of adult salmon is fraught with challenges outside of the program's control, including harvest, predation, poor ocean foraging conditions for several years, and the limited number of years with which to measure success in the presence of all those other factors. But again, we are sending more chinook to the ocean, so yes, the number of fish has increased.

If we are trying to save the fish and increase the population of fish overall, why waste the money seeding, strawing, planting logs only to see it washed away during the artificial high flows. Contracts could be written up to include the above procedures at a more favorable time.

We are required to revegetate at the conclusion of construction, so the ripping, mulching, seeding, and spreading of straw happens as the last step of construction following final grading (in the early fall). This gives the seed a chance to become established during the rainy season before our restoration flows in the spring. The straw is a temporary addition to reduce erosion prior to establishment of new vegetation; it is not meant to be a permanent feature.

Are the controls for the Trinity River and Shasta Dam releases staged at Keswick and is this information precise and accurate as stated?

The timing and volume of water transfers from Trinity/Lewiston Reservoirs into Whiskeytown and ultimately Keswick, as well as releases from Shasta, are managed out of the Bureau of Reclamation's Northern California Area Office in Shasta Lake and the Mid-Pacific Regional

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